Lord Caitanya Converts Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya

Editor's Note -This simple play would be very instructive and enjoyable to see.

SCENE ONE - The Forest

(Lord Nityananda and several devotees come on. They look about, admiring the setting.)

Narrator: After taking the renounced order of life, Sannyasa, Lord Caitanya journeyed with Lord Nityananda and other devotees toward Jagannath Puri in Orissa. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived at the city known as Kamalpura, He decided to take His bath in the Bhaginadi River and therefore left His Sannyasa staff in the care of Lord Nityananda. While Lord Caitanya was bathing and visiting the temple of Lord Siva known as Kapotesvara, Lord Nityananda broke the staff into three pieces and threw them into the river. The pastimes of the Lord are both mysterious and wonderful.

Caitanya: Nitai Prabhu, I will take my bath here in this beautiful river and then I will visit the place known as Kapotesware, a temple of Lord Siva. Please keep my danda very safe while I am gone.

Nityananda: My Lord, I am Your servant, whatever You request, I shall do. (Sri Caitanya leaves.) Hmmm ... What is the reason for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to carry this Danda wherever He goes? He is not a sannyasi, He is more than Paramahamsa! He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself!! I will break this danda and cast the pieces into the river. Then, He will never have to carry it again!

Narrator: After dancing and chanting and exhibiting many wondrous symptoms of ecstasy at Kapotesware, Sri Caitanya returned and requested Nityananda Prabhu to give back His danda.

(Lord Caitanya runs on excitedly.)

Caitanya: Can You see it?! There is the temple of Lord Jagannath in the distance! Hare Krsna! Hari Bol!

Nityananda: Yes, Mahaprabhu, let us all chant!

(sings) Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tu me(sings) Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tu me(sings) Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tu me(sings) Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tu me(sings) Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tu me

(They chant responsibly for a few minutes. Everyone sings in response)

Caitanya: (impatient) Nityananda, please return my staff to Me and We shall go the temple.

Nityananda:My dear Lord, Your staff has been broken into three parts.

Caitanya: How has this happened?

Nityananda: You fell down in ecstasy and I caught You; but We fell down on Your staff and it was broken. I threw the useless pieces into the river.

Caitanya: My sannyasa staff has been broken?! Now I am a bad example of sannyasa behavior. All of you have helped Me greatly by bringing Me here to Jagannatha Puri. However, My only possession was that one staff and You could not keep it safely for Me when I gave it to You. You should all go ahead of Me to Puri! Or get behind Me, I don't care which, but I will go alone to see Lord Jagannatha!

Mukunda: My Lord, please go ahead and we will all follow you.

Caitanya: I will leave at once.

SCENE TWO Jagannath Puri

Narrator: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then began to walk very swiftly to see Lord Jagannath. The devotees could not understand why Lord Nityananda had broken the staff and why Lord Caitanya, first allowing Him to do so, then became angry. No one could understand the purpose of both the Lords, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu.

So, in ecstasy, Lord Caitanya proceeded to the Jagannath Puri temple. Upon seeing the

Deity of Lord Jagannath, He became restless due to Love of Godhead and ran swiftly to

embrace the Lord of the Universe. Being overwhelmed by Love of God, Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu fainted and fell to the floor of the temple.

(Music, lights dim and come up to indicate the passage of time)

Watchman: Here is some poor beggar lying on the floor of Lord Jagannath's temple. The rascal is asleep! I'll get Him up! Hey You! Get Up! Get up! You can't sleep here! This is the house of the Lord! Get up! Get up! If You don't get up immediately I will beat You with my stick!

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya bursts into the room.)

Sarvabhauma: No! Don't touch Him!!

Watchman: (gasp) Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya!!

Sarvabhauma: Yes, and I forbid you to touch Him!!

Watchman: I am the watchman and it is my duty to make sure that no homeless men sleep or loiter in the temple.

Sarvabhauma: This man is a great devotee! Immediately leave Him to me! GO! Leave us immediately! (Watchman leaves) Hmmmm ? Hmmmmm ? He is so beautiful!! This is not ordinary sleep - this beautiful young man is actually experiencing Love of God! I can identify all the symptoms of ecstasy on His body! I want very much to study this. (calling) Watchman! Come here, please hurry!

(Watchman enters)

Watchman: (Go there, come here - why can't these sadhus make up their minds?) Yes, Your Holiness?

Sarvabhauma: Give me a hand, please. We will move this Devotee to my ashram where He will be more comfortable.

(They pick up Lord Caitanya and take Him off stage.) Gently!

SCENE THREE

(Watchman and temple employees enter from one side and Lord Nityananda's party enters from the other.)

Watchman: It was amazing! Did you see that? A sannyasi came in and fell down asleep on the floor. Of course, I had to get Him out, didn't I? ? After all, that's my job! Then, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, the most famous scholar in all of India comes and tells me to leave the unconscious man alone. Then, the Bhattacharya takes the Sannyasi to his own house! I can't understand it, can you? Why do these things only happen to me? Anyway,

the Sannyasi was certainly beautiful, wasn't He? He certainly was ! And He did start sleeping just after He saw Lord Jagannath; I guess He became tired … Anyway, I can't understand it! Who am I to judge? I better just not think about it.

(Watchman and temple employees leave.)

Mukunda: Lord Nityananda! Did You hear that?

Nityananda: Yes, I think I know who that beautiful Sannyasi was!!

Mukunda: It sounds like Lord Caitanya fell into an ecstatic trance and fainted after seeing Lord Jagannath! The scholar, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, took the Lord to his home when the Lord's consciousness did not return ?(Gopinath Acharya enters)

Gopinath: Mukunda Datta!! Is that you? What are you doing in Jagannath Puri?!?

Mukunda: Gopinath Acharya?! Yes, Gopinath!

Gopinath: Please accept my humble obeisances. I am astonished to see you here!

Mukunda: And I am very happy to see you!

Gopinath: Please tell me any news of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu!

Mukunda: The Lord has already arrived here!

Gopinath: Lord Caitanya here?! In Jagannath Puri?!? How wonderful!

Mukunda: And we have all come with Lord Caitanya. Here is Lord Nityananda.

Gopinath: (bows down) I am blessed to have Your presence, Sri Nityananda Prabhu. I beg that You and Your party take Your meals at my home for as long as You stay in Jagannath Puri. Now, please, tell me news of the Lord!

Mukunda: Thank you. Have you heard that He took sannyasa?

Gopinath: No, I hadn't heard. Please tell me more!

Mukunda: After taking sannyasa, Lord Caitanya desired to reside in Jagannath Puri in order
that He would sometimes see the Bengali devotees and they would get news from the Orissan
devotees.

Gopinath: But, where is He now? Is He in the temple, now?

Mukunda: Lord Caitanya left our company and walked ahead to see Lord Jagannath. We have
just arrived here and we are looking for Him.

Nityananda: We have heard that a beautiful young Sannyasi fainted upon seeing Lord Jagannath
and, in an unconscious condition, has been taken to the ashram of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya.

Gopinath: Lord Caitanya has been taken to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya's? That's wonderful;
Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya is my brother-in-law! Let us go there at once!
(All leave)

SCENE FOUR Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya's Ashram

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya and several of his disciples are with Lord Caitanya.)

Narrator: Meanwhile, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya, with the help of His disciples, laid Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu down in a very sanctified room. After examining the body of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya saw that His stomach was not moving. The Lord did not even appear to be breathing. The Bhattacharya became very anxious.

Sarvabhauma: The Sannyasi does not seem to be breathing ? He may be in ecstasy or then again, He may be dead. I know a simple test to determine whether He is alive or not ... I'll get a cotton swab - ah, here's one, and I'll hold it by the Sannyasi's nostrils, and if the fibers of the cotton swab move due to His breathing, I'll know that He is still alive. If they do not move - well, there is no use keeping a dead body within one's home? (excited) They're moving!! He's alive! He's not dead, but His condition has been brought about by transcendental love of Krsna!! These signs only take place in great eternally liberated souls, how is this possible in the body of an unknown person?

(Gopinath Acharya enters.)

Disciple: Gopinath Acarya ki jaya!

Sarvabhauma: Gopinath! How fortunate you are to have come at this time!

Gopinath: Oh! To see the Lord like this is very painful, but still, I am happy to see the Lord in any condition!
(Lord Nityananda, Mukunda Datta and other devotees enter.)

Sarvabhauma: Nityananda Prabhu is here, too!! Namaste!

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya greets Lord Nityananda with folded hands.)
Please sit down.

(Disciples spread out mats or cushions. Everyone sits.)

I am so fortunate that you have all come to my humble ashram. My disciples will bring refreshments. Nityananda Prabhu, have You ever seen such a situation? This Sannyasi has fallen down in the temple of Lord Jagannath and I cannot understand how to bring Him back to external consciousness.

Nityananda: Sir, This is not an ordinary sannyasi.

Sarvabhauma: Yes, I can see that.

Nityananda: Nor is His unconsciousness ordinary.

Sarvabhauma: Yes, I can see that, too.

Nityananda: He is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form
of His devotee and His ecstasy is such that He can be aroused only if we all chant together the
Hare Krsna Mahamanta very loudly!

Sarvabhauma: Are You sure that will wake Him up? I don’t think it could.

Nityananda: Yes, it will, if we chant loudly enough. Everyone chant!

All: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
(Lord Caitanya awakens. He stands up and raises His arms.)

Caitanya: Hari! Hari!Caitanya: Hari! Hari!Caitanya: Hari! Hari!Caitanya: Hari! Hari!Caitanya: Hari! Hari!

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya bows down and touches Lord Caitanya’s lotus feet. Vaisnavas sit down again and Disciples serve them water.)

Sarvabhauma: Namo Narayana! I offer my obeisances to Narayana!!

Caitanya: Krsna matir astu, let your attention be on Krsna and may you ultimately become Krsna Conscious!

Sarvabhauma: So, You are simply a Vaishnava sannyasi, a worshipper of Lord Krsna. But, as you are a sannyasi, I wish to become Your servant.

Caitanya: You are Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya! You are the most famous and learned scholar of Vedanta philosophy! You are the master of all the people of the world. I must take shelter of you!

Sarvabhauma: It sees to be very dangerous for You to go alone to the temple of Lord Jagannath. Today, I had to carry You here when You fainted.

Caitanya: Thank you for saving Me from My difficult situation, today.

Sarvabhauma: What happened today may occur again and I may not be there to protect You next time.

Caitanya: You are right, from now on, I will never enter the temple alone. I will only view Lord Jagannath from the place known as the Garuda Stambha.

Sarvabhauma: That is a good idea. Now, I will arrange an apartment for You to stay in while You are in Jagannath Puri. I will see to it that you comfortable and peaceful.

Caitanya: Thank You.

Sarvabhauma: Please go now to see Lord Jagannath!

(Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityananda and Their party leave.)

Sarvabhauma: (to Gopinatha Acharya) This sannyasi is very meek and humble by nature. And He is very beautiful. I am feeling very affectionate to Him. What is His name?

Gopinath: His name is Sri Krsna Caitanya.

Sarvabhauma: Sri Krsna is a good name but the name Caitanya means that He belongs to a second class community of sannyasis.

Gopinath: Sri Krsna Caitanya is the Supreme Lord Himself and He is therefore independent of
any formalities.

Sarvabhauma: It is also worrying me that this sannyasi is just in the most youthful part of his
life. He is so beautiful, also! How will He be able to follow the strict regulations of sannyasa!?

Gopinath: My dear Bhattacarya, you do not yet know the greatness of Sri Caitanya
Mahaprabhu!

Sarvabhauma: Still, I would like to help Him in some way. I will continuously speak to Him
the philosophy of monism. He will thereby know that we are all God and therefore He will be
able to remain fixed in His vows of renunciation.

Gopinath: Bhattacharya! All the symptoms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are found in
Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to the highest degree!!

Sarvabhauma: Yes, I will educate Him, change Him from being a Vaisnava, fix Him up in monism, offer Him saffron cloth and initiate Him again as a first class Saraswate sannyasi!

Gopinath: Those who are ignorant find the conclusions of theauthorized teachers very difficult to understand. You are a renowned scholar and a teacher of many disciples. Indeed, there is no scholar to match your learning on all the earth.

Nevertheless, because you do not have even a pinch of the Lord’s mercy, you cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although He was present in your own home!

(They exit. Lights dim and increase to indicate the passage of time.)

SCENE FIVE - The Temple

Narrator: The next morning, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya visited the temple of Lord Jagannath together. Both of them were in a very pleasant mood. When they entered the temple, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya offered Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu a seat, while He himself sat down on the floor, out of respect for a sannyasi.

Sarvabhauma: My dear Sri Krsna Caitanya, now I wish to explain something to You for Your own good. You are a Vaisnava sannyasi, You are young and handsome and I feel much affection for You. I therefore want to give You Absolute Knowledge- the knowledge of Vedanta!

Caitanya: You are very merciful to Me and therefore I feel that it is My duty to obey your orders.

Sarvabhauma: Hearing this Vedanta philosophy is a sannyasi's main business. You should not waste any more time. You should start hearing Vedanta philosophy immediately and you should never stop hearing it! I will begin now. I am reading from Sri Sankacarya's commentary on the Vedanta, the Sarirak Bhasya ?

Ommmmmmmmmmmmm (cough cough)
Athato Brahma Jijnasa ?We must now inquire into the Absolute Truth
Janma dyasya yatah - The source of everything is Brahman, the formless.
Tat Vam Asmi - You are the same!

Narrator: Thus for seven days, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya continuously instructed the Lord in Vedanta philosophy. He explained that God is formless, inactive, and has no qualities. He described the living entity as God, but in illusion. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya presented that the world was false and that the Absolute Truth, by the accumulation of all evidences by logic, experimentation and hypothesis proved to be impersonal. For seven days, Lord Caitanya did not say a word. He simply sat and listened to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. On the eighth day, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya said to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu:

Sarvabhauma: You have been listening to the Vedanta Philosophy from me continually for seven days!

Caitanya: Yes.

Sarvabhauma: But, You have simply been listening, completely silent! Since You do not say whether You think it is right or wrong, I cannot know whether You are actually understanding the Vedanta philosophy or not.

Caitanya: My Spiritual Master said that I was a fool so I generally do not study Vedanta philosophy. I am just trying to hear your commentary because you said that it is My duty as a sannyasi.

Sarvabhauma: But, You are silent! Why don't You ask me questions about my commentary?? I would gladly explain it clearly and simply for You, and then You will no longer be a fool!!

Caitanya: I can understand the meaning of each verse of the Vedanta Sutra, clearly and easily.

Sarvabhauma: Then, what don't You understand?

Caitanya: Each verse of the Vedanta Sutra is clear, but your explanation of the verses covers the meaning, just like a cloud covers the sun.

Sarvabhauma: What!!!! You understand the verses but You don't understand my commentary!??!

Caitanya: Yes, you have simply abandoned the direct meaning and proceeded with your own imaginative interpretation. The statements in the scripture are clear and perfect. They describe the Supreme Absolute Truth as a Person, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full with all opulences such as Fame, wisdom, beauty, wealth, strength and renunciation. But, you are trying to explain Him as impersonal and formless!

Narrator: Then Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Who presented Himself as a fool to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya, explained the philosophy of Krsna Consciousness, fully quoting the authorized scriptures as evidence. Lord Caitanya amazed the Bhattacharya and proved to him, beyond a doubt, that Krsna is a Person, the Supreme Person, and that the purified consciousness of every soul is service to Krsna with great love and devotion.

After hearing the explanation and evidence given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya tried to defend the Vedanta

interpretations of Sankacaharya. Being a great scholar and word juggler, he presented unlimited opposition to Lord Caitanya's teachings. He presented false arguments and false logic and tried to intimidate and defeat the Lord. However, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu refuted all these additional arguments as well, speaking long into the night, and firmly established the Absolute Truth as Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya became astonished. He was stunned and could not say
anything more.

Sarvabhauma: uh but You well ? if we ? conversely ? that is to say it could possibly uh ?

Caitanya: Do not be astonished. Actually, devotional service to Krsna is the highest perfection of human activities. Do you know the ?atmaram verse? from the Srimad Bhagavatam?

Sarvabhauma: Yes, of course, it is a most famous verse.

Caitanya: Could you please chant it for me?

Sarvabhauma: (cough cough) Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1, Chapter

Atmaramas ca munaye
Nirgrantha apy urukrame
Kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim
Ittham bhuta guno harih

Caitanya: And the meaning?

Sarvabhauma: Those who are self satisfied, including those who are actually liberated are also attracted to the loving service of Krishna, the Supreme Lord. He is called Krsna because His qualities and activities are all transcendental and wonderful.

Caitanya: Would you kindly explain that verse to Me?Caitanya: Would you kindly explain that verse to Me?Caitanya: Would you kindly explain that verse to Me?

Narrator: Upon being requested by Lord Caitanya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya explained the atmarama verse in nine different scholarly ways. After finishing his explanations, the scholar Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya said:

Sarvabhauma: My dear sir, I have a great desire to hear Your explanation of this verse.

Narrator: Then, Lord Caitanya, Who is Krsna and possesses all knowledge, explained just the first word in the verse atmarama in eighteen different scholarly ways, astounding Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. Then the Lord said to the humbled scholar:

Caitanya: Krsna is unlimited. It is impossible to explain His unlimited qualities completely.

Sarvabhauma: Amazing!!! By Your mercy, I am beginning to understand now the meaning of the atmarama verse.? Until now, I have simply wasted my time. You, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, are certainly Lord Krsna Himself!! I was proud of my learning and I couldn't understand Him. Because I couldn't understand Him, I committed so many offenses - I pray that You will forgive me.

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya offers long obeisances directly at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Flute music plays. Actor dressed as Vishnu appears. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya looks at them both with awe and then Visnu plays His flute to indicate that He is Krsna. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya bows His head to the floor again and Vishnu leaves. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya looks up and sees Lord Caitanya once again.)

Narrator: So, by the mercy of Lord Caitanya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya could understand who
he was and the purpose of his life. He could understand that he was a spirit soul meant to serve
Krsna with his mind, body and words. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya could also understand the
Importance of chanting the Holy Names of the Lord and assisting Lord Caitanya in the
distribution of love of Godhead everywhere.

Sarvabhauma: HARE KRSNA!! All Glories to Sri Krsna Caitanya!! Hare Krsna!!

(Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya rises and Lord Caitanya embraces him, causing the Bhattacharya to faint. He quickly rises up and starts to dance giddily while chanting the mahamantra quite happily, sometimes falling. Lord Caitanya laughs and catches his hands, trying to keep him from falling. Gopinath Acarya walks in at this time.)

Gopinath: Haha! Jai Sri Caitanya! This is wonderful! My Lord, You are so merciful that You
can convert even a dry old word wrangler like my brother-in-law! Now he, too, tastes the nectar
of the Holy Names!

Sarvabhauma: (out of breath, ecstatic, transformed) O my dear Lord, You have delivered the
whole world, but that is not a very great feat for You. However, You have also delivered me,
and that is certainly a credit to Your wonderful power. I had become dull-headed by reading
too many books. Indeed I had become like a cold iron bar. But, out of causeless mercy, You
have melted my heart and thereby shown that Your ability is the topmost power.
(They have a kirtan. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya whirls about ecstatically.)

Narrator: So, by the mercy of Sri Krsna Caitanya, all the dullness in the mind of the
Bhattacharya was removed and he was released from material bondage in the bodily conception
of life. Free from pride, he became a pure devotee of Krsna and he always chanted the Holy
Name of Sri Krsna Caitanya, the son of Mother Saci. Indeed, chanting the Holy Name
Became his life and soul.

If one hears, with faith and love, these pastimes concerning Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's
meeting with Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya, he very soon becomes freed from the net of speculation
and fruitive activities and attains the shelter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's lotus feet.
(Kirtan)